

## **First Intermediate Period**

### **The 7<sup>th</sup> Dynasty**

The Papyrus of **Ipu-wer** described the conditions of Egypt accurately at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The central authority disintegrated, and large numbers of Bedouins from the east attacked the country, started to plunder people and spread fear. This all led to an upheaval that deteriorated everything.

According to Manetho, after the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty started the 7<sup>th</sup> Dynasty which consisted of 70 kings ruled for 70 days. It seems unlikely that this has actually happened; the only logical explanation is that a group of 70 persons from the elite of the country including priests, scribes, high-rank officials, and possibly princes formed a council that ruled the country as a group of 70 rulers. Nevertheless, this type of administrative system was new in Egypt. For this reason, it ended immediately after 70 days because the Egyptians never accepted it.

The origin of the 7<sup>th</sup> Dynasty was Memphis, which was the seat of their rule. From the time of their third ruler, a new royal family started in Memphis. This was the 8<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, whose founder was *Ntry-k3-Rc*. Meanwhile, a powerful family formed the 9<sup>th</sup> Dynasty at Ihnasya, whose founder was Akhtoy (Khety I). The most convincing opinion which is accepted by most scholars is that **the 7<sup>th</sup> Dynasty took Memphis as the capital**; its rule only lasted for a few months. It was succeeded by another royal family that started **a new dynasty ruled in Memphis**. It consisted of 15 kings.

### **The 8<sup>th</sup> Dynasty**

During the 8<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the capital was still the city of Memphis. We do not know much of the 8<sup>th</sup> Dynasty or the number of its kings for definite. It seems that the country was divided: the Delta (Lower Egypt) was attacked by the Bedouins, still causing much fear; in Middle and Upper Egypt, things were much better since the governor of each nome wanted to become independent in his own home, and wanted to control some areas of the neighbouring province. This all led to a continuous state of conflict and unsettledness.

The rulers at Memphis depended on the support of some nome governors in Upper Egypt. They tried to gain their support either by giving them some privileges, or even by marriage. Inside the ruins of the temple of Min at Coptos were found three decrees, sent by the last three kings of the 8<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to members of the family of Coptos. They highly appreciated these decrees and inscribed their texts on some stone stelae inside the temple. It is noteworthy that most of the monuments of the 8<sup>th</sup> Dynasty were found in Abydos and Coptos, nowadays one of the cities in Qena Governorate, and these monuments were not in Memphis even though Memphis was the capital.

At a certain point of time, the ruling family of Ihnasya took over the throne, and managed to rule over the country.

### **The 9<sup>th</sup> Dynasty**

It seems that the change from the 8<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to the 9<sup>th</sup> passed smoothly, as the new kings followed the policy of their predecessors. The number of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dynasty rulers was roughly between 4 and 13. According to the Turin Papyrus, the number of them was 13. But because this papyrus was badly damaged, we lost most of their names. The Turin Papyrus mentioned that the kings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dynasty ruled for 109 years.

The founder of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dynasty was called **Akhtoy (Khety I)** who was the head of a powerful family at Ihnasya, and he took over the authority of the country. According to Manetho, this king was cruel and treated the Egyptians badly; they suffered a lot in his time until he became mad at the end of his life, and was attacked by a crocodile and then died.

However, the country was spilt into three different powers:

1. **The Delta:** it was exposed to the attacks of the Bedouins, the Asiatics already started to infiltrate in the country and settled in the Delta.

2. **Middle Egypt:** including Faiyum, Menia, Asyut, Sohag up to Abydos were in the hands of Akhtoy. Thus, Abydos was considered the border of his control.

3. **Beyond Abydos** became in the hand of the nome governors who were still each powerful ruling in his own province, and trying to increase his power and defeat the rivals.

Thus, we assume that the rulers of Ihnasya were still asking for the support of the nome governors who were building their own tombs in their provinces, but still loyal to the Ihnasya rulers, paying tributes to them.

### **The 10<sup>th</sup> Dynasty**

The rulers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Dynasty were ruling from Ihnasya, from which they descended. Egypt was under the same conditions as during the 9<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, weak rulers in the capitals, and the nome governors were still enjoying complete authority and independence in their provinces. Thus, the country was in complete chaos, and lost its central authority.

Since the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> Dynasty a powerful family appeared and ran concurrently in Thebes. They thought of themselves as having the right to the throne rather than the rulers of Ihnasya. So, the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (whose city of origin is Thebes) was contemporary with the late 10<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

However, the rulers at Ihnasya still enjoyed the loyalty and faithfulness of the princes of Asyut and those of Armant, which means that the task was not easy for the rulers of Thebes. The first name known to us in the 10<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is **Nefer-ka-Re** who was the second ruler at Ihnasya, and is known from the wall inscriptions in the tomb of Ankhtifi, who was the governor of the first three southern nomes: Elephantine, Edfu and Armant. He recorded in his tomb a famine in Upper Egypt, but he saved his people from it by helping them and distributing corn.

**Wag-ka-Re:** He was the successor of Nefer-ka-Re at Ihnasya, and is known as Akhtoy the Fourth who left his famous instructions to his son. During his time, he started to clear the Delta from the Bedouins, and then turned to Upper Egypt to deal with the Thebans. He engaged in a war with them, which took place at Thinis, near Abydos. At the beginning the

rulers of Ihnasya (Hierakleopolis) achieved victory, supported by the princes of Asyut. Then, the Thebans regained control under the leadership of Inyotef (Wahankh) who returned the fortress of This to his control, and moved northwards until he captured the city of Kom Ishkau, Aphroditopolis, in the 10<sup>th</sup> nome of Upper Egypt, thus reaching the borders of Asyut.

Then, followed **Mery-ka-Re**: the son of Akhtoy IV, during his time a powerful governor appeared at Thebes, who is Mentuhotep II who resumed war against the Hierakleopolitans and he captured Asyut, then moved northwards and took El-Ashmunein. Thus, the Hierakleopolitans were only left with some of Middle Egypt and the Delta.

Then after the death of Mery-ka-Re succeeded **Akhtoy V**: during his time the Thebans continued their war until they achieved complete victory over the Hierakleopolitans and succeeded to submit the whole of the country, starting the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty thus the Middle Kingdom under the control of one king. It is in the time of Akhtoy V that the *Story of the Eloquent Peasant* occurred.

The **Tale of the Eloquent Peasant**, a work from another genre, provides further precious clues as to the nature of society and morals in the 1<sup>st</sup> Intermediate Period. This text is preserved only in the form of four papyrus copies dating to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, and the lack of any surviving post-Middle Kingdom copy suggests that it did not form part of the classic scribal education. The peasant of the story lives during the reign of King Nebkaure Khety II. The eloquence of the peasant is not simply an entertaining composition: each of his speeches is designed to express metaphorically the conflict between the negative and positive forces that was tearing apart the Egyptian society. The ending of the story is also its basic message: royal power is capable of restoring harmony by punishing the evildoer. It is perhaps possible to argue that the piece was originally composed before the Middle Kingdom. But the final argument presented by the peasant is the recourse to Anubis, whose influence is further suggested by the name of the peasant Khuy-n-inpw 'One protected by Anubis'. This refers to that the Egyptians no longer relied on the king's decision only, but looked towards an afterlife in which everyone would be required to account for their own actions during life.

## **The Middle Kingdom**

### **The Eleventh Dynasty**

#### **1) Mentuhotep II:**

Mentuhotep II succeeded Inyotef III<sup>1</sup> in about 2061 B.C. When he came to the Theban throne under the name **S'ankhibtawy** ('He who breathes life into the heart of the Two Lands'), his domain stretched from the First Cataract to the tenth nome of Upper Egypt; in other words it was still reduced to the north by the territory of the princes of Asyut. A hostile peace was maintained between the two kingdoms, but this was disrupted when the Thinite nome, suffering from famine, revolted against the Herakleopolitan people. Mentuhotep captured Asyut and passed through the 15<sup>th</sup> nome without resistance – this was effectively the fall of the Herakleopolitan Dynasty (in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of his reign).

Mentuhotep was proclaimed the king of Egypt with the new title of '**Nebhepetre, the son of Re**'; he declared his southern origins by taking the **Horus name Netjerihedjet** 'Divine is the White Crown'. He had not spread his authority over the whole country, however and the process of pacification was to last for several more years. At this time Dakhla Oasis, in the Western Desert, acted as a temporary place of refuge for the political opponents of the Theban regime until they were hunted down by the followers of Mentuhotep.

He rewarded the loyal princes of the Oryx and the Hare nomes by allowing them to continue to rule their provinces, and with the exception of those at Asyut, he also reinstalled the other local rulers in Upper Egypt. He controlled the rest of the country through Theban administrators, particularly watching over the provinces of Herakleopolis and Heliopolis. **Mentuhotep moved the capital to Thebes**, created the new office of 'Governor of the North' and re-established the old chancellories and the post of vizier. Three of the viziers who held office during his reign are known: Dagi, Bebi, and Ipy.

These political changes were probably accomplished by about the 30<sup>th</sup> year of Mentuhotep's reign, having thus achieved the reunification of the country, he took a new Horus name: Sematawy 'He who unifies the Two Lands' in the year 39 of his reign.

He was also a builder: while continuing the work of restoration undertaken by Inyotef III in the temples of Heqaib and Satis at Elephantine, he also carried out further construction in Deir el-Ballas, Dendera, El-Kab, the temple of Hathor at Gebelein, and the temple at Abydos. He added to the decoration of the sanctuaries of Montu at el-Tod and Armant and in the cliffs of Deir el-Bahari he built himself a funerary monument modeled on the pyramid complexes of the Old Kingdom.

The Metropolitan expedition found about **60 mummies of soldiers** who were probably killed during the war with Herakleopolis, and were buried nearby the king in Thebes.

He also revived the foreign policy of the Old Kingdom by leading an expedition to the west against the Temehu and Tehenu Libyans and into Sinai against the nomads. In this way, he protected the country's

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<sup>1</sup> For evidence as to Mentuhotep II's parentage, one needs to turn to a rock-inscription at Shatt el-Rigal, in which the king is shown flanked by the 'King's mother . . . , Iah, and the God's Father, the Son of Re, Inyotef'. The latter is given a cartouche, and is now generally identified with the deceased Inyotef III. This reinforces the stela of Henun in Cairo, which although badly broken, can be reconstructed as stating that Mentuhotep II was indeed Inyotef III's son. See, A. Dodson and D. Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London, 2004), p. 85.

boundaries from the threat of the Asiatics, whom he succeeded in pushing back as far as the River Litani. In Nubia, he attempted to attain the level of domination that had been achieved by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, at least as far as mining and trading were concerned. But Nubia itself still remained independent, despite the fact that such areas as Abu Ballas were reconquered and various expeditions were sent under the command of the chancellor Khety, who had been entrusted with the rule of all the countries of the south. Two of Khety's attacks are known to have taken place in the 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> years of Mentuhotep's reign, extending Egyptian influence as far as the land of Wawat.

In the year 39 of his reign (i.e. 30 years after the fall of Herakleopolis) he celebrated his *sed*-festival, and added some statues for himself in an Osiride form in his funerary temple. In the same year, he went on a Nile-cruise, accompanied with members of his family and courtiers, down south until he reached Gebel el-Silsilah which was regarded as the southern frontier of Egypt. The explanation given to that trip is that he wanted to wait for the arrival of his son Inyotef who was probably leading a campaign to Nubia. It is possible that Mentuhotep appointed his son as his co-regent, but he died early and was buried in the court of the funerary temple of his father. Anyway, his funerary temple is now destroyed.

Mentuhotep II died around 2010 B.C., after a reign of 51 years; he left his second son, Mentuhotep III.

## **2) Mentuhotep III:**

Mentuhotep III S'ankhtawyef 'He who breathes new life into the Two Lands' was left with the throne of a prosperous and very organized country. His reign lasted for about 12 years.

During this reign, he continued to pursue the construction programmes begun by his father at Abydos, el-Kab, Armant, el-Tod, Elephantine, and western Thebes, where he built a chapel to Thoth.

His own tomb, near Deir el-Bahari, was never completed.

Mentuhotep III consolidated Egyptian control over the eastern Delta, building fortresses along its borders in order to protect the area from the Asiatics. This defense system was to be maintained for the whole of the Middle Kingdom, although later Egyptians tended to credit Khety III with being the founder of the Delta defenses, and a religious cult was dedicated to both Khety III and Mentuhotep III at el-Khatana in the eastern Delta.

Mentuhotep III was also able to revive the practice of sending expeditions to Punt. In the 8<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, an expedition of 3000 men under the command of Henenu were sent from Koptos to Wadi Gasus, digging 12 new wells along the route in order to provide water for future expeditions between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea. The expedition acquired numerous products from Punt, including quantities of 'gum Arabic'. On their return journey, the same expedition also quarried stone in Wadi Hammamat.

A particularly interesting piece of evidence has survived from the end of Mentuhotep III's prosperous reign. This takes the form of the correspondence of a man named Hekanakht, who was funerary priest of the vizier Ipy at Thebes. Being far from his estates, he sent a whole series of letters to his family, who were looking after his lands while he was absent. These documents were discovered at Deir el-Bahari in the tomb of a certain Meseh, who was also connected in some way with Ipy. The letters include all kinds of information concerning the distribution of the properties of Ipy, farming, taxes, and an inventory of goods dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Mentuhotep III – all precious sources of information for the economic and legal systems of the period. Hekanakht also described the problems of his time, including the beginning of famine in the Theban region.

After his 12 years of reign, his son Senusert succeeded him, only for a very short period of time. Then followed a period of disruption for 5 years.

### **3) Mentuhotep IV:**

After the death of Mentuhotep III, the country was left in a confused state. At this point, the Turin Canon mentions 'seven empty years' which correspond to the reign of Mentuhotep IV, whose coronation name Nebtawyre 'Re is the Lord of the Two Lands', perhaps represents a return to the values of the Old Kingdom.

A graffito in Wadi Hammamat, in which he is simply named as Nebtawy, announces the sending of an expedition of 1000 men in the second year of his reign to bring back stone sarcophagi, find new wells in the Eastern Desert and locate a more favourable port on the Red Sea. This port, Mersa Gawasis, was to be established during the reign of Amenemhat II as the embarkation point for expeditions to Punt.

Mentuhotep IV's expedition to the Red Sea was led by his vizier, Amenemhat, who is generally identified with Amenemhat I, his successor. Only one inscription links the two kings in such a way as to suggest that there was a co-regency.

## The Twelfth Dynasty

### 1) Amenemhat I:

Mentuhotep IV was the last representative of the family of the Theban princes, and Amenemhat I was the first ruler of a new dynasty. This is confirmed by his choice of Horus name: *Whm-mswt* 'He who repeats births', which suggests that he was the first of a new line. Despite this definite dynastic change, there does not seem to have been any major political disruption in Egypt. This is to say, however, that the transition from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty was not a totally smooth one, since it appears that there were at least two other claimants to the throne: a man called Inyotef and another in Nubia called Segerseni, with whom Amenemhat I was probably still battling in the first few years of his reign.

The links with the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty had not after all been broken: the officials, like the new rulers themselves, continued to trace their power back to the previous regime.

Even the rise to power of Amenemhat I may not have been a shock to the system, for at this time the royal succession perhaps depended as much on the choice expressed by the Theban princes as on the king's familial connections with his predecessor.

Amenemhat I continued the new ideological standpoint taken up by Mentuhotep IV by adopting **Sehetepibre** 'He who appeases the heart of Re' as his coronation name. His own name Amenemhat 'Amun is at the head', served to announce a political programme that was to combine the primacy of Amun with a return to Heliopolitan theology, thus creating god Amon-Re, on whom the new pharaohs were to base their authority.

Amenemhat himself was not a Theban but the son of a woman from Elephantine called Nofret and a priest called Senusert. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, it was Senusert, Amenemhat's father, who was considered the actual founder of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

- The new ruler used literature to publicize the proofs of his legitimacy. He turned to the genre of oracle: a recital in the mouth of Neferti, a Heliopolitan sage who bears certain similarities to the magician Djedi in Papyrus Westcar.

Like Djedi, Neferti is summoned to the court of King Sneferu, in whose reign the story is supposed to have taken place. But the reason for the choice of Sneferu is not the same in both cases: at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, he had become the model of good-natured kingship to whom the new kings traced their origins. Neferti conjures up a dialogue at the end of which announcing the appearance of Amenemhat under the name of Ameny.

- Amenemhat I is known to have built at Bubastis, el-Khatana, and Tanis.
- He must have sent an expedition to Elephantine soon after his accession to the throne. He placed Khnemhotep I, governor of the Oryx nome, in charge of this expedition; it traveled up the Nile in twenty boats, possibly reaching Lower Nubia where it would have encountered the supporters of Segerseni.
- Amenemhat I also undertook a tour of inspection in Wadi Tumilat, where he ordered the construction of the fortifications known as the '**Walls of the Prince**'.
- He undertook important *building works*:

**At Karnak**, from which a few statues and a granite naos have survived. It is even possible that it was Amenemhat I who established the original temple of Mut to the south of the precinct of Amon-Re.

**At Koptos:** Traces of his building work have also survived, where he partly decorated the temple of Min;

**At Abydos:** where he dedicated a granite altar to Osiris;

**At Dendera:** where he consecrated a gateway, also in granite to Hathor;

**At Memphis** where he built the temple of Ptah.

**At el-Lisht:** he also had a pyramid built for himself at el-Lisht, about 50 km. south of Memphis.

- Amenemhat I was especially responsible for the reorganization of the administration. He transferred the capital from Thebes to Middle Egypt by founding a new city near **el-Lisht**, which was to serve as its necropolis. He named it as *Imn-m-ḥ3t-Itt-t3wy* 'It is Amenemhat who has conquered the Two Lands', later abbreviated to *Itt-t3wy*.
- Like Mentuhotep II before him, he allowed those nomarchs who had supported his cause (including the rulers of the Oryx nome) to retain their power. On one hand, he reinforced their authority by reviving ancient titles; on the other hand he restricted their power in practice by appointing completely new governors (as at Elephantine, Asyut and Cusae) or by new measures of land registration. Khnemhotep II of Beni Hasan records that Amenemhat I divided the nomes into a different set of towns. He also redistributed the territories by reference to the Nile Flood and reintroduced military conscription (recruitment).
- Amenemhat I reigned for 20 years that were a turning point, for it was then that he began a co-regency with his eldest son Senusert, thus starting a practice that was systematically followed throughout the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. This association with his son coincided with the introduction of a new phase of foreign policy: the heir apparent acted as the king's deputy and was entrusted with the control of the army, probably in order to introduce the prince to the foreign nations with whom he would eventually have to deal. This strategy was to assume great importance in the Ramesside Period, when Egypt was fighting for overall control of the Near East.
- In Amenemhat's time however, the king's main efforts were still directed towards Nubia. In the year 23<sup>rd</sup> of his reign, he undertook the first recorded 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty campaign into Nubia, capturing Gerf Hussein and the ancient diorite quarries at Wadi Toshka. A second campaign in the 29<sup>th</sup> year resulted in a much deeper attack into Nubian territory, which culminated in the foundation of a frontier fort at **Semna** on the Second Cataract.  
A statue of Djefaihapy, the nomarch of Asyut in Amenemhat's reign, has been found at **Kerma**, suggesting that the Egyptians were at least present in Upper Nubia in the early 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The suggestion that Djefaihapy was the governor of Kerma seems unlikely; more probably the statue was taken there at a later period, perhaps during the reign of Senusert I.
- On the Near Eastern front, the general Nysumontu reported a victory over the Bedouins in the 24<sup>th</sup> year of Amenemhat's reign – this would have safeguarded the turquoise mining operations at Serabit el-Kadim in Sinai. At the same time, diplomatic relations resumed with Byblos and the Aegean world.
- Just as the Prince Senusert was returning from a campaign beyond the Wadi Natrun, against opponents seeking refuge with the Libyans, a crisis broke out: Amenemhat I was **assassinated** in about mid-February 1962 BC after a secret conspiracy in his harem.

## **2) Senusert I: Kheperkare**

- He undoubtedly succeeded to the throne, but the impact of the conspiracy was worrying for the official literature to deal with the problem in no less than two new compositions. In the New Kingdom, these two works, like the **Prophecies of Neferti** became the most common classic school texts of the royal ideology. The first story is that of Sinuhe who was among Senusert's retinue when he returned from his campaign in Libya. Sinuhe chanced to overhear the announcement made to the young prince concerning his father's assassination. He fled away,



either because he had heard something that he should not or for some other unknown reason. He passed through the Delta to the east, crossing the Suez and finally reaching Syria. There, one of the Bedouins recently conquered by Egypt welcomed and adopted him. The years passed by, and after various adventures Sinuhe became a respected and powerful tribal chieftain. In response to his pleas, Senusert agreed to give him a royal pardon. He returned to his own country, met the royal children once more and died among his own people.

- The story of Sinuhe was one of the most popular works in Egyptian literature, of which several hundred copies have survived.
- Equally large numbers of copies were made of the ***Instruction of Amenemhat I***, a text modeled on the earlier Instruction for Merikare, the aim of which was less to explain the assassination of Amenemhat I than to confirm the legitimacy of his successor.

The oldest surviving versions of the Instruction were not written any earlier than the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The lack of early copies of the work does not exclude the possibility that it was composed at some time in the reign of Senusert I with the aim of justifying his rule.

Before describing his own death, the king – like Khety III before him- passes on wise advice to his successor. The king passed on his authority to his successor. The rest of the text leads to some doubts as to whether there was a genuine co-regency of Amenemhat I and Senusert I. However, other evidence suggests that Senusert's rise to power took place with no problems, and that his long reign of **45 years** was a peaceful one. On the other hand, this does not mean that Senusert I himself was the direct beneficiary of the harem conspiracy against his father.

- Senusert was a builder, and there is surviving evidence of his activity at 35 sites (including the Faiyum region, which he was the first to exploit) as well as his pyramid at el-Lisht, to the south of his father's.
- He revived the Heliopolitan tradition by taking Neferkare as his coronation name; he also rebuilt the temple of Re-Atum at Heliopolis in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of his reign. On the occasion of his first *sed* festival, in the 30<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, he erected two obelisks in front of the temple pylon at Heliopolis. His activities also extended to the temple of Amon-Re at Karnak, where H. Chevrier has reconstructed a *sed* festival kiosk of Senusert I, using blocks that had been reused by Amenhotep III in the building of the 3<sup>rd</sup> pylon. This kiosk '**The White Chapel**' is now exhibited in the open-air museum at Karnak. Senusert I remodeled the temple of Khenti-amentiu-Osiris at Abydos. Following this, the king's officials also erected numerous memorial stelae and small shrines at Abydos, thus initiating a practice that was to become standard in both Middle and New Kingdoms for devout men.
- In his foreign policy, Senusert I continued the work of the last ten years of his father's reign. He conquered Lower Nubia and in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of his reign established a garrison at **Buhen** in the area of the Second Cataract. He also exercised control over the Land of Kush, from the Second to the Third Cataract, including the island of Sai, and he maintained commercial links with the Kingdom of Kerma.
- In the Eastern Desert, exploitation of the gold mines to the east of Koptos and quarrying in Wadi Hammamat both continued: Senusert appears to have extracted sufficient stone blocks for 60 sphinxes and 150 statues, numbers that correspond well with his activities as a builder. He also obtained alabaster from the quarries at Hatnub, sending at least two expeditions in the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> years of his reign.
- In the west, he consolidated his hold over the oases in the Libyan Desert, and particularly maintained the links between Abydos and Kharga Oasis. He continued to reinforce the country's north-eastern frontiers, thus protecting the mining work at Serabit el-Khadim in the Sinai. Commercial links with Syria-Palestine extended as far north as Ugarit during this period.
- According to some opinions, Senusert I was the one who started the canal connecting between the Nile and the Red Sea [however, this opinion was opposed by some scholars who suggested

that the canal with its function above-described did not exist until the time of Nykau about 600 B.C].

**N.B. Instruction of Amenemhat I:** It hints at a dispute over the succession, and it was while Senusert was campaigning in Libya that he was told of his father's death. Amenemhat was almost surely murdered, and a text (of the instruction) from Senusert's times presents the account supposedly spoken by his father from beyond the grave. The text is thought to be an early 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty composition, possibly created on behalf of Senusert I to support his claim to the throne.

### **3) Amenemhat II:**

- He ruled for almost 30 peaceful years after a brief two year co-regency.
- The conquest of Nubia had been accomplished and while Amenemhat was still prince regent he took part in a peaceful expedition led by Ameny, nomarch of the Oryx nome.
- Amenemhat exploited the gold and turquoise mines through local princes who were subject to Egyptian control, and the only military event recorded during his reign was the inspection of a fortress in **Wawat** by one of his officials.
- At the end of his reign, he also organized an expedition to Punt.
- During his reign, Egypt played an important role in the Near East as a whole. In 1936, the remains of a foundation deposit were found in the temple of Montu at El-Tod; these consisted of four chests filled with Syrian tribute in the form of silverware, including number of Aegean-style vessels and lapis-lazuli amulets from Mesopotamia.
- There is evidence of a 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty cult of Sneferu in the region of Modern Ankara.
- The Egyptians themselves were exposed to eastern influences, which began to have more impact on their civilization and art. Minoan ceramics have been found both at El-Lahun and in a tomb at Abydos, while at the same time Egyptian objects were being taken to Crete. Foreign workers were coming into Egypt, bringing with them new techniques and preparing the way for a slow infiltration that would eventually result in 'Asiatics' gaining temporary control over the country.
- Egypt exerted particularly strong influence over Byblos, where the chiefs gave themselves Egyptian titles, wrote hieroglyphs and used artefacts originally made on the banks of the Nile.
- His pyramid-complex, the so-called White Pyramid at Dahshur (poorly preserved and not yet thoroughly examined), was unique in being set on a platform. His daughters were buried in the forecourt of his complex.
- The historical events of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty comes from a set of official records (known as *genut*) that have been partly preserved in the temple at Tod. These are some of the most useful surviving texts in terms of understanding the day-to-day world of the Egyptian palace. In 1974, the Egyptian Antiquities Organization discovered one of the most important *genut* inscriptions at Mit Rahina. Although the inscription mentions Senusert I, it clearly belongs to the reign of his son, Amenemhat II. These annals contain very detailed descriptions of donations made to various temples, lists of statues and buildings, reports of both military and trading expeditions, and royal activities such as hunting.

**N.B. El-Tod:** It is situated **to the south of Armant** on the eastern bank of the Nile. Its origins are back to the Old Kingdom; some traces of a mud-brick chapel were found there dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. In the Middle Kingdom, the site received particular attention; Mentuhotep II built a temple there for god Montu, to which Mentuhotep III and Senusert I added later on. In the New Kingdom, Thutmose III and others added and restored parts of this temple.

#### 4) Senusert II: Khakheperre

- After a co-regency of almost 5 years, Senusert II succeeded his father on the throne. His reign of about 15 years was to be overshadowed by that of his own successor, Senusert III.
- Senusert II first undertook the extensive exploitation of the Faiyum area for hunting and fishing, with Crocodilopolis as its regional centre. This project was not to mature fully until the reign of his grandson, Amenemhat III.
- Senusert II got on the construction of an irrigation system starting from Bahr Youssef and flowing into the future Lake Qarun. He achieved this by building a dyke at el-Lahun and adding to it a network of drainage canals. Although the project was not finished until the time of Amenemhat III, the presence of these great building works in the Faiyum was no doubt the reason why the royal necropolis was moved first to Dahshur, in the reign of Amenemhat II, and next to el-Lahun.
- Senusert II built his funerary complex at el-Lahun; it is a massive mud-brick structure with a rocky core; large limestone cross walls provided support for the brick sectors, which were then cased in limestone. The entrance to the pyramid was also on the south. The layout of corridors and rooms within the pyramid is unique; the female members of the king's family may be represented by eight *mastaba*-tombs.
- To the east of his funerary complex at el-Lahun, Senusert II established a **community of workers** engaged on these important building projects. The site of this community, now known as Kahun, was the first artificial town to be discovered in Egypt; another, better preserved, example of this type of settlement is the workmen's village of Deir el-Medineh, which dates mainly to the Ramesside Period.

For a long time, Kahun was the only relatively complete example of an Egyptian settlement, but the excavations at various other sites, such as el-Amarna, Balat and Elephantine, have begun to shed further light on domestic architecture.

The **Town of Kahun** has survived only in plan, but a large number of papyri have been discovered in the houses as well as in the temple of Anubis, which was located in the southern part of the settlement. These texts are extremely diverse, providing evidence of artistic, economic and administrative activity. There are a number of different literary types, including royal hymns, episodes from the Tale of Horus and Seth, a fragment of a mathematical calculation, some judicial documents, some accounting texts, and fragments from temple archives covering the whole period of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

This does not mean that Kahun was Senusert II's capital, since Deir el-Medineh settlement supplied an even larger number of texts but played no significant political role.

#### 5) Senusert III: Khakaure

- Turin Canon gives him a reign of over 30 years.
- When he rose to the throne he had to deal with a **political problem** which his great grandfather, Senusert I had already attempted to address by his division of the vizier's office into two posts. The basic problem was that the families of local rulers had once more become almost as powerful as the king himself, judging from the wealth of the tombs at Beni Hassan. Senusert III reduced the authority of these local rulers, who had been gradually transforming themselves into local dynasties. In this new system of government, the country was under the direct control of the viziers of three ministries: one for the north, another for the south, and the

third for the 'head of the south', namely Elephantine and Lower Nubia. Each ministry was headed by one official with the help of an assistant and a council. Orders were passed on to various officials who had them carried out by scribes.

There were two main consequences of this reform: the loss of the nobles' influence and the rise of the middle classes, which can be observed in the increasing of votives dedicated to Osiris at Abydos.

The king himself raised the status of his own home province by undertaking the construction of a temple of Montu at **Medamud**. **Provincialism had appeared initially in the First Intermediate Period but it reached its peak in the Middle Kingdom.**

**N.B. Medamud:** It is situated 10 km. north-east of Luxor. Known in Egyptian texts as MAdw, and Medamud is the modern name. The temple in it dates to the Middle Kingdom, it is dedicated to god Montu. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, many additions were added to it.

- The long period of military inactivity in Nubia during the two preceding reigns had encouraged the Nubian tribes to move gradually north of the Third Cataract. Senusert III therefore undertook steps to deal with this threat. He began by enlarging the canal that Merenre had built near Shellal to allow boats to pass through the rapids at Aswan. Then in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> years of his reign, he sent military expeditions against Kush. In the 19<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, the Egyptians were able to travel by boat up to the Second Cataract, for the campaigns of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> years of his reign had allowed the southern border to be established at Semna. This frontier was reinforced by a chain of eight mud-brick fortresses between Semna and Buhen.
- Senusert III built the fortress at Semna, and he set up stelae in the fortresses of Semna and Uronarti, which are the best examples of Egyptian military architecture. These stelae were set up at the southern borders, with their inscriptions reminding everyone of Senusert's conquest and punishments.
- He is known to have sent one military expedition into Syria-Palestine. His foreign policy was to reaffirm Egypt's influence over the Near East and Nubia.
- He built a mud-brick pyramid, 60 m. high, cased with limestone blocks at Dahshur. *Mastaba*-tombs for his immediate family, the queens and the princesses, were built within the enclosure wall in a form of a complex similar to that of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty. Neither the king's chamber nor the sarcophagus appears to have been used. However, **at the southern end of Abydos** a second funerary complex was constructed for Senusert, consisting of a subterranean tomb and a mortuary temple, where a cult for the king lasted for over two centuries. Some scholars suspect that the Abydos complex may have been his actual burial place, but no remains were found there either.

### **6) Amenemhat III: (Nymaatre)**

- He was honoured and respected from Kerma to Byblos and during his reign numerous eastern workers, from peasants to soldiers and craftsmen came to Egypt. He strengthened the frontier at Semna.
- He ruled the country for 45 years, during which it reached the peak of prosperity: peace was both at home and abroad, and the exploitation of the Faiyum went hand-in-hand with the development of irrigation and an enormous growth in mining and quarrying activities.
- He exploited extensively in the Sinai region, in the turquoise and copper mines: between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> years of his reign no less than 49 texts were inscribed at Serabit el-Khadim, as well as ten at Wadi Maghara and Wadi Nasb. The temple of Hathor at Serabit el-Khadim was enlarged and the mines were given defences against Bedouin attacks. This construction programme in Sinai was continued by Amenemhat IV. The expeditions to quarries elsewhere in Egypt also flourished, whether to Tura, Wadi Hammamat, Aswan or the area around Toshka.

- As for his building achievements: apart from the fortifying of Semna (he enlarged some of the fortresses there) and the construction of the temple at Quban in Nubia, he dedicated himself to the development of the Faiyum; his name became closely associated with the area in the Graeco-Roman period, when he was worshipped under the name of **Lamares**.
- Excavations at **Biahmu** (in the north-western Faiyum) revealed two colossal granite statues of the seated figure of Amenemhat III resting on a limestone base. He also constructed and decorated the temple of Sobek at Kiman Fares (another Faiyum site), and expanded the Ptah temple at Memphis, and built a chapel of Renenutet, goddess of the harvest at Medinet Maadi.
- He constructed a temple at Medinet Maadi (in the south-western Faiyum) and another at Medinet Shedet.
- Above all, he built for himself two pyramids, one at Dahshur and the other at Hawara (in the south-eastern Faiyum). Beside the Hawara pyramid were found the remains of his mortuary temple, which Strabo described as the **Labyrinth**, because of its maze of rooms and corridors. Although described by six classical writers including Herodotus and Strabo, no details of its plan were coherent; therefore efforts at reconstructing its original appearance have been unsuccessful.
- Amenemhat's burial chamber at Hawara was originally intended to be shared with Princess **Neferuptah**, who was probably his sister or daughter, but she was later transferred to a small, separate pyramid (now almost totally destroyed) a few kilometers away.

#### **7) Amenemhat IV: (Maakherure)**

- He succeeded his father in 1798 B.C after a brief co-regency.
- He continued to treat the Faiyum region as a high priority. It was perhaps Amenemhat IV who built the **temple of Qasr el-Sagha**, 8 km. north of Lake Qarun. He finished the construction of the temple that his father had begun at Medinet Maadi, then known as Dja. The sanctuary, dedicated to the 'living Renenutet of Dja', and Sobek of Shedet, consisted at that time of a pronaos in the form of a hypostyle hall leading to three chapels which associated the two deities with Amenemhat III and IV. The sanctuary was later enlarged, and then redecorated much later, during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian.
- He ruled for a little less than 10 years and by the time he died the country was once more moving into a decline. The reasons for this were similar to those that led to the end of the Old Kingdom. The excessive length of the reigns of Senusert III and Amenemhat III (about 50 years each) led to various problems. This situation perhaps explains why, just as in the late 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, another queen rose to power: Sobekneferu.

#### **8) Sobekneferu:**

- She was a sister (and possibly also a wife) of Amenemhat IV.
- She was described in her tutelary as a woman – pharaoh. Usually the queen uses feminine titles, but several masculine ones were also used.
- She constructed her pyramid near that of Amenemhat III in Hawara, and some monuments bearing her name were found nearby that pyramid. Three headless statues of the queen were found in the Faiyum, and a few other items contain her name. Some statues belonging to the queen show her costume combining elements from male and female dress.
- The northern pyramid at **Mazghuna**, in the southern part of Dahshur, has been ascribed to her, while the southern pyramid probably belonged to Amenemhat IV. If this is correct, Sobekneferu

did not actually use this pyramid, which perhaps indicates that her short reign (lasting only three years according to the king-lists) ended in violence. There is no proof for this.

However, the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, which began the Second Intermediate Period, appears to have been the legitimate successor, whether by blood or by marriage, to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, at least as far as the first ruler of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Sekhemrekhutawy, is concerned. Moreover, there is nothing to support the suggestion of an outbreak of violence like that at the end of the Old Kingdom: during the century and a half leading up to the appearance of the Hyksos rulers in Egypt, the country does not seem to have collapsed in any way. There is instead a feeling that it was only the central power that was subject to crises, whereas the stability of the civilization as a whole remained constant.